

PH0001732

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
COUNTY:
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE
FEB 25 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:  
LeDroit Park Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: *Identified boundary by ...*  
(See No. 7, for boundary description)

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Congressman Walter E. Fauntroy, D.C.

STATE: District of Columbia

CODE: II

COUNTY: Washington, D.C.

CODE: 001

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Private institutions</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Multiple private and public ownership

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE: DC

CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Recorder of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER: 6th and D Streets, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: District of Columbia

CODE: 11

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Proposed District of Columbia additions to the National Register of Historic Places recommended by the Joint Committee on Landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: 1968, revised 1973  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: National Capital Planning Commission

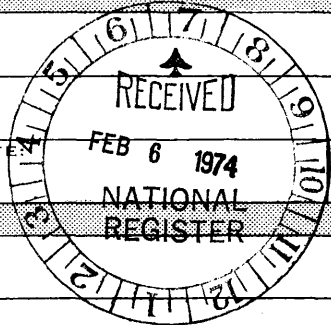
STREET AND NUMBER: 1325 G Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington,

STATE: District of Columbia

CODE: II

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: DC

COUNTY: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ENTRY NUMBER: FEB 25 1974

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DATE:

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The LeDroit Park Historic District was originally a planned architecturally, unified subdivision of substantial detached and semidetached houses designed by James McGill and constructed mainly between 1873 and 1877. The subdivision is located in the northwest sector of the city, to the south of Howard University, and just north of Florida Avenue (Boundary Street), the original L'Enfant boundary. LeDroit Park presently contains approximately 50 of the original 64 McGill houses. The remaining brick and frame rowhouses were constructed in the late 1800's and 1890's. This change in type of development from large detached houses to higher density rowhouse corresponds to the exodus of whites from, and the movement of blacks into, the area. Today LeDroit Park has much of the same scale, architecture, and character that it had at the turn of the century.

The McGill houses were designed in the tradition of A.J. Downing's Country Houses which first appeared in 1850 and, like the pattern-books, were designed in the style of Italian villas, Gothic cottages, and many variations in between. Illustrated in prospectuses published by the developer entitled, "LeDroit Park Illustrated" and the "Architectural Advertiser," the houses are depicted with varied facades and similar floor plans. They are described in the former brochure as follows: "These houses are built separately or in pairs, are nearly all of brick, are of varied designs...no two being alike, either in shape, style of finish or color of the exterior." Although many of the houses are in good condition, they have lost a lot of their decorative elements as can be seen in a comparison of the illustrations with the existing houses. Some of the grander houses have been destroyed such as the McClélland house which was razed to make way for a Safeway store with a large parking lot. Howard University has razed some of the houses, and private developers have taken some. A few of the original houses are in a deteriorated condition, as are the carriage houses.

There is one block left in LeDroit Park which includes all of the original McGill houses and no intrusions. This is the 400 block of U Street, N.W. The houses differ in one significant way from the original design of the street. They are now stripped of much of the decorative wood ornamentation that varied with each facade and which provided Swiss Chateau, Gothic cottage etc. motifs; also they are all presently painted the same buff color so that much of the planned contrast of color and texture is lost. The houses, however, are in good condition and are well-maintained, so that all they need is cosmetic treatment.

Another block which contains several very handsome McGill houses is the 500 block of T Street N.W. The Gothic cottage style house at 317 T Street (constructed for Joseph B. Marvin) is still a very fine example of McGill's style and retains some of its decorative wood ornamentation in the treatment of windows in the front bay, the steeply pitched roof and gables, and the patterned roofing. Originally the house had roof cresting, finials and pendants on each gable, elaborate wood decoration within each gable, shutters, and a wooden balustrade carved with Gothic motifs over the front bay.

Located next door at 325 T Street is a Second-Empire style house which was designed for W. Scott Smith. This house, which is in need of repair, retains much of its original decoration and is one of the few houses designed

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) Subdivision created in 1873

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the LeDroit Park Historic District a Category II Landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia.

Created as a subdivision in 1873, LeDroit Park represents an important aspect in the development of Washington. LeDroit Park is important for several reasons. It is an early example of a planned, architecturally unified subdivision. This development of substantial detached and semi-detached homes, designed by one architect, James H. McGill, was packaged by its developers to become an affluent and exclusive subdivision. The architectural style is borrowed from pattern books influenced by A.J. Downing, and the houses are designed in the style of Italian villas, Gothic cottages and many variations in between. LeDroit Park is also important because it represents an early unsuccessful attempt at integration, and it has served as home for many prominent white and black Washingtonians. Today, LeDroit Park retains much of the same scale and character and most of the architecture that it had at the turn of the century. A walk through the area reveals many of the original freestanding houses scattered among the slightly later brick and frame rowhouses.

LeDroit Park was developed by Amzi L. Barber, one of the founders of Howard University. Barber married the daughter of successful real estate broker, LeDroit Langdon, and resigned his post at Howard in 1873. He and his brother-in-law, Andrew Langdon, purchased the tract of land which was developed as LeDroit Park from Howard University for \$115,000 in the form of a promissory note at 7% with no cash payment. In 1874, the Executive Committee of Howard was in financial difficulties and accepted an offer from A.L. Barber and Company for \$95,000 in full payment of Langdon's note.

Although the above is probably the most accurate account of the real estate transaction that established LeDroit Park, A.L. Barber and Company put forth an entirely different account in their brochure, "LeDroit Park Illustrated" published in 1877. This account states that LeDroit Park was composed of four tracts formerly known as Miller, Gilman, Prather, and McClelland properties, and that the first three tracts were purchased at different times from June 1872 to March 1873 by Messrs. A. L. Barber and Company, and that McClelland later agreed to unite his property with the above.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

James H. McGill's Architectural Advertiser, Washington, D.C., 1879,  
 A.L. Barber & Co., LeDroit Park Illustrated, Part I, Washington, D.C.:  
 Beresford, 1877.

Much information and help was provided by Mrs. Roland Brown.

Information was provided by Mr. Truax of the Columbia Historical Society.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

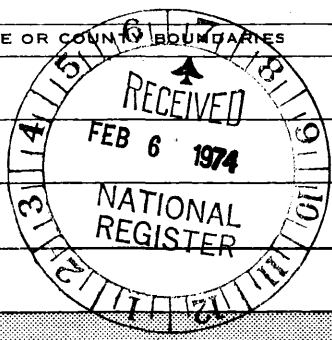
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
NW	Degrees Minutes Seconds 38 ° 55 ' 03 "	Degrees Minutes Seconds 77 ° 01 ' 18 "		Degrees Minutes Seconds ° ' "	Degrees Minutes Seconds ° ' "	
NE	38 ° 55 ' 03 "	77 ° 00 ' 52 "				
SE	38 ° 54 ' 50 "	77 ° 00 ' 52 "				
SW	38 ° 54 ' 50 "	77 ° 01 ' 18 "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **42.6 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Suzanne Ganschinietz, Architectural Historian**

ORGANIZATION: **National Capital Planning Commission**      DATE: **11 December 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1325 G Street, N.W.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington**      STATE: **District of Columbia**      CODE: **11**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name: *James H. Barber*  
 Title: **Assistant to the Mayor for Housing Programs**

Date: **FEB 4 1974**

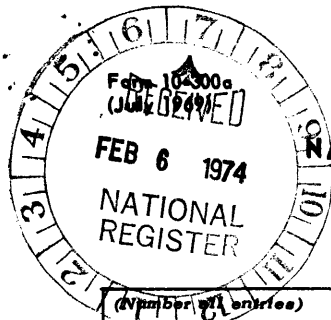
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

*A. R. ...*  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: *2/25/74*

ATTEST:  
*George F. Emery*  
 Acting Keeper of The National Register

Date: *Feb 18, 1974*



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
COUNTY	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
FEB 25 1974	

(Number of entries)

7. Description - Continued

in this style left in LeDroit Park. Constructed of brick, it is two stories high with a very steep mansard roof and tower with elaborate dormers and decorative brick chimney caps. The iron balustrade above the tower still remains, as do the bracketed cornice and carved wooden bay windows.

The double house on Third and T Streets constructed for General William Birney and Mr. Arthur Birney also has a high mansard roof. The house is in good condition and retains its patterned and scalloped roof, a finial, the elaborate moulded wood cornice and dormers, the window hoods and the wooden supports for the porch.

The house at 201 T Street (later the home of the Frelinghuysen University) still retains some Eastlavian motifs, especially on the interior, combined with Italian villa style alterations added probably in the 1880's, and reflected in the twisted columns, the hexagonal gazebo with roundheaded stained-glass windows and red-tiled roof, all of which lend an eclectic air to the structure.

Two of the original carriage houses also are standing. One is located behind the house at 325 T Street, N.W. and the other is located at the rear of 1922 Third Street.

The rowhouses, constructed in the late 1800's and 1890's, are primarily low rise brick structures with fine terra-cotta and decorative brick-work. They have rooflines which are frequently accented with turrets, towers, pedimented gables, and iron cresting and combine to provide a varied and rhythmic pattern to the streets. Many of the houses and rowhouses retain decorative iron work fences and balustrades. One feature unique in Washington are the twisted porch columns found in the rowhouses on Third Street near the circle.

The original developers took care in landscaping the area with the planting of ornamental trees and hedges. The circle at the juncture of T and Third Streets provides a focal point for the area and could easily be restored.

Boundary Description

Beginning at the intersection of the west side of Bohrer Street, N.W. extended southwesterly across Florida Avenue, N.W., with the south side of Florida Avenue, N.W., thence southeasterly along the south side of Florida Avenue, N.W. to its intersection with the south side of Rhode Island Avenue, N.W., thence northeasterly along the south side of Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. to its intersection with the east side of Second Street, N.W., thence north along the east side of Second Street, N.W., to its intersection with the north side of Elm Street, N.W. extended east across Second Street, N.W., thence west along the north side of Elm Street, N.W., to its intersection with the east side of Third Street, N.W., thence north along the east side of Third Street, N.W., to its intersection with the north property line of lot 800 in Square 3085 extended east across Third Street, N.W., thence west across Third Street, N.W., along the north property line of said lot 800 and continuing west in Square

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

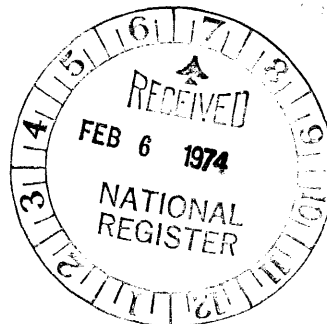
(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	FEB 25 1974

(Number all entries)

7. Description - Continued

3085 along the north property lines of lots 803, 804, 805, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 36, 37, 38, and 39 to the northwest corner of said lot 39, thence east across a 10 foot alley in Square 3085 to the northeast corner of lot 40 in Square 3085, thence east along the north property line of said lot 40 and continuing west in Square 3085 along the north property lines of lots 41, 42, 43, and 44 in Square 3085 to the northwest corner of said lot 44, thence east along the north property line of said lot 44 extended across Fourth Street, N.W. to its intersection with the west side of Fourth Street, N.W., thence south along the west side of Fourth Street, N.W. to its intersection with the north property line of lot 33 in Square 3080, thence west along the north property line of said lot 33 to its intersection with the east property line of lot 34 in Square 3080, thence north along the east property line of said lot 34 to the northeast corner of said lot 34, thence west along the north property line of said lot 34 and continuing west along the north property lines of lots 35, 37, 38, 39, and 40 in Square 3080 to the northwest corner of said lot 40, thence southwesterly across an 11 foot alley in Square 3080 to the northeast corner of lot 817 in Square 3080, thence west along the north property line of said lot 817 and continuing west along the north property line of lots 12, 13, 15, 16, 29, 30, and 31, in Square 3080 to the northwest corner of said lot 31, thence west along the north property line of said lot 31 extended across Fifth Street, N.W. to its intersection with the west side of Fifth Street, N.W., thence south along the west side of Fifth Street, N.W. to its intersection with the north property line of lot 84 in Square 3079, thence southwesterly along the north property line of said lot 84 to the northwest corner of said lot 84, thence southwesterly across a 10 foot alley in Square 3079 to the northeast corner of lot 73 in Square 3079, thence southwesterly along the north property line of said lot 73 to the northwest corner of said lot 73, thence south along the west side of said lot 73 to its intersection with the north side of a 15 foot alley in Square 3079, thence west along the north side of said 15 foot alley to its intersection with the west side of a 10 foot alley in Square 3079, thence southwesterly along the west side of said alley to its intersection with the north side of Bohrer Street, N.W., thence west along the north side of Bohrer Street, N.W., to its intersection with the west side of Bohrer Street, N.W., thence southwesterly along the west side of Bohrer Street, N.W. to the point of beginning.

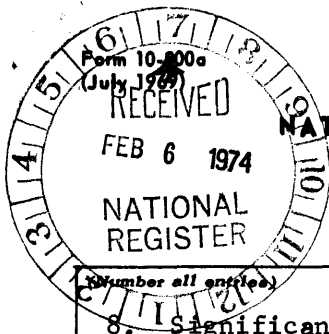


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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	FEB 25 1974



8. Significance - Continued

The architect for the development was James H. McGill, a Washington architect and developer, who designed several downtown structures including the LeDroit Building. McGill's sketches for the development were published in two publications which served as prospectuses for the Park. These were "LeDroit Park Illustrated," previously mentioned, and a larger publication, James H. McGill's "Architectural Advertiser", published in 1879. The sketches and floor plans for the houses are very similar in concept to those published in A.J. Downing's sketches and plans in The Architecture of Country Houses which first appeared in 1850. By 1877, 41 houses had been built at a cost of \$200,000. By 1887, approximately 64 houses comprised the subdivision. Today approximately 50 of these remain. This includes both single and double houses. The 1890's and the 1900's are characterized by the brick and frame rowhouses that began to be built between the McGill houses, and, by the turn of the century, the suburb had the character it has today.

LeDroit Park was developed as an exclusively white residential area, and this policy was enforced to the extent that a wall enclosed the area and guards were stationed at the gate to restrict access. Some of the better known residents of this era included General William Birney and Arthur Birney (Professor of Law at Howard), General William Wade Dudley, Benjamin Butterworth, Congressman from Ohio and later Commissioner of Patents, James H. McGill, and many other prominent businessmen and bureaucrats.

The fence which surrounded LeDroit Park became a focal point of unrest between the white inhabitants inside and the blacks who were kept out. Attempts were made through legal actions to have the fence removed, and, in July of 1888, the fence was torn down by protesting blacks. Four days later it was rebuilt, but this incident was the beginning of a movement toward integration of the area. In 1893, a barber, Octavius Williams, became, perhaps, the first black to move into the subdivision. His daughter, Mrs. Gilbert Spears lives in the House at 388 U Street today, and recalls that her father told her often about the time shortly after they had moved into the house and were seated at dinner when a shot was fired into the dining room. The bullet remained in the wall until the children were old enough to see it and appreciate the story. The LeDroit Park area was integrated only a short time, and by the beginning of the First World War, the white families had moved out and the area was almost totally black.

Among the prominent blacks who have lived in Le Droit Park were, Judge Terrell, the first black municipal Judge and his wife, Mary Church Terrell, the first woman member of the Board of Education; Major Christian Fleetwood, Civil War Hero; General Benjamin Davis, first black Army general; and Violinist Clarence Cameron White. Washington's Mayor Walter Washington and his wife today reside in her father's house on T Street. The poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar is reputed to have lived with his wife, Alice Moore, in LeDroit Park.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
<b>FEB 25 1974</b>	

(Number all entries)

8. Significance - Continued

The Frelinghuysen University also had its roots in LeDroit Park. This school, founded in 1906 by Dr. Jesse Lawson and Dr. Anna J. Cooper, was established to provide evening education classes for employed blacks who were unable to attend school during the day. Dr. Cooper donated the use of her house at 201 T Street for the school and the school remained at that location until it closed in the early 1960's.





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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

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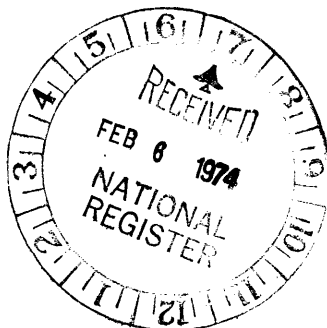
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9. Bibliographical References - Continued

Information was provided by Mrs. Laretta Jackson.

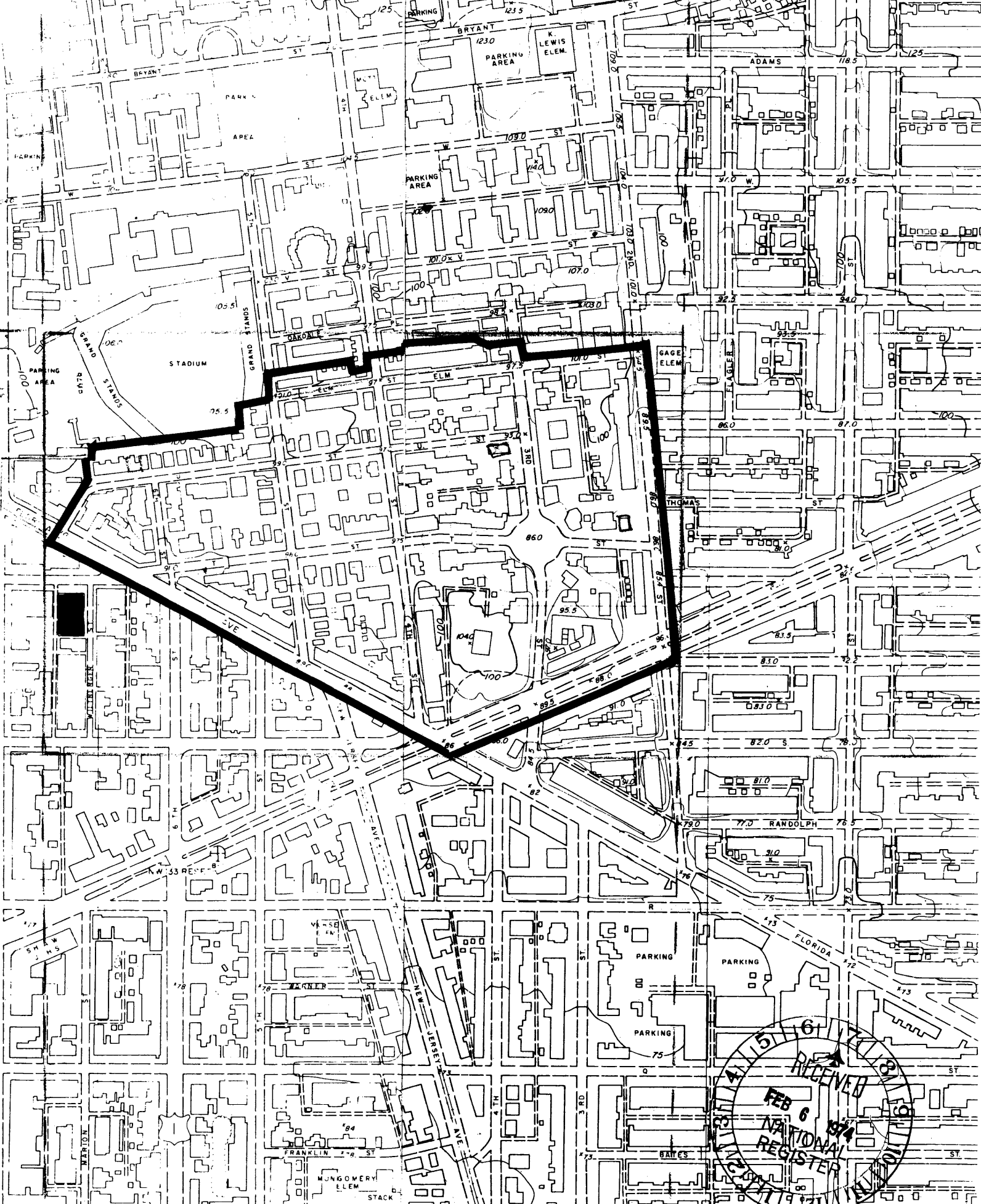
A Study of Historic Sites in the District of Columbia of Special Significance to Afro-Americans, Afro-American BiCentennial Corporation, December 1972, p.87.

Clippings file of the Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King Library.



77° 01' 18" W. LONG.

77° 00' 52" W. LONG.



77° 01' 18" W. LONG.

77° 00' 52" W. LONG.

